

Story 886 1964 Tape 1

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The Prophetic Dream of the Star and Crescent

There were once three children from the same family sent to attend a school that taught the reading of the Koran. After the hoca¹ at the school had taught them for a few days, he said, "When you go to bed tonight, you will have a dream, and in the morning, you will tell me what you dreamed."

The next day when the children went to school, the hoca asked the oldest of them what he had dreamed. The boy described his dream. The hoca then asked the middle child what he had dreamed. Like the oldest, the middle son described his dream. But when the hoca asked the youngest child what he had dreamed, that youngest son refused to tell him. Then the hoca beat the boy.

this youngest boy returned home crying, his mother asked him, "What is the matter?"

"Mother, my hoca beat me."

"Why?"

¹ A hoca is a Moslem priest

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"I refused to tell him about a dream I had last night,
and so he beat me

"Well, what was your dream?" When he refused to
tell his mother, she beat him too

The boy then ran crying to his father, saying, "Both my
hoca and my mother beat me."

"Why?"

"I refused to tell them a dream I had last night. That
was why they beat me.

"Well, what was your dream?" When the boy refused to
tell his father, he received a third beating. He then ran
away from home.

As the boy was passing the palace of the padişah, he
was saying to himself, "That was really a remarkable dream I
had." The padişah, who was standing by an open window of the
palace, overheard his remark.

"What did you dream?" the padişah asked

"I will not tell you the dream I had."

"How dare you make fun of the padişah?" asked the
padişah. He then ordered the public executioner to catch the
boy and kill him. The daughter of the padişah lived a short
distance from the palace at a place close to the execution
grounds. When she looked out of her window that day, she

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saw a handsome young man being led to the place of execution by her father's executioner.

When the girl interrupted the executioner and his men they refused to talk with her, saying, "No, no! We are supposed to execute this boy. If we do not kill him, then your father will kill us."

But the girl said, "You kill a dog and then dip the boy's shirt in the blood of the dog. Take the bloody shirt to my father as evidence of the execution² and leave the boy with me." They agreed to do this, and she took the boy hid him in her house.

Now it happened that this incident took place at a time when the padişah had received an ultimatum from a European country. They had sent him a complicated machine with the following instructions: "This machine must be disassembled and then reassembled. When it is put together, there must be no parts missing and no parts left over. It must be exactly the same as when we sent it to you. If you can do this, we shall add a European city to your territory; if you cannot, we shall declare war on you."

The padişah and his men disassembled the machine all

² The bloodstained garment as evidence of execution is a traditional (and very old) motif in folktales.

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right, but when they put it together again, there was one screw left over. Again they took it apart and reassembled it, but this time there was a screw missing. The padişah was so worried about reassembling that machine perfectly that he could not sleep at night. The youngest son who had kept his dream a secret noticed the condition of the padişah and said to the princess, "I think that your father is in trouble of some kind. Go and find out what is troubling him.

Going to the palace, the girl discovered that her father was very concerned about the problem of reassembling the machine correctly. The padişah and all his mechanics were working on it constantly. The girl returned to her own house and told the boy that her father was greatly upset because neither he nor his mechanics could manage to reassemble a machine which they had taken apart.

"Go and fetch that machine here so that I can reassemble it for him."

the girl returned to the palace and asked the padişah to let her take the machine home and reassemble it correctly, he asked, "What do you know about machinery? Are you a mechanic?

She paid no attention to this remark, however, and when she found an opportunity, she picked up the machine and took it back with her to her house. The following morning the

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youngest son rolled up his sleeves and set to work reassembling the machine. By working very hard for a short while, he managed to reassemble it correctly. After the girl had returned to the palace, the padişah sent it back to Europe. There it was examined and declared to be reassembled perfectly.

This time the people in the European court sent to the Turkish padişah a painted stick with the following instructions: "You are to determine which end of this stick came from the root end of the tree trunk and which end came from the branch end of the trunk. If you can tell us that, all will be well; if you cannot, then we shall declare war on you."

The padişah gathered at the palace all of the carpenters and wise men of the land to work on this problem. No matter how hard they worked at this problem, they could not solve it. After this had been going on for a day or two, the youngest son again said to the girl, "I believe that there is something upsetting your father again. Go and see what it is."

Going to the palace, the young girl asked, "Father, is the matter?"

"Here is what is the matter," he said. "This painted stick was sent to us by the court of a certain European country with the following message: 'You are to determine

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which end of this stick came from the root end of the tree trunk and which end came from the branch end. If you can tell us that, we shall add a European city to your territory; if you cannot, then we shall declare war on you.'

When the girl heard this, she said, "Father, let me take the stick for a while, and I shall then bring you the correct answer."

"What will you do with it? Are you a carpenter?"

"Never mind--just let me try," she said. She then took the stick and carried it home to the youngest son.

After examining the stick carefully, the young man gave her the following directions: "Go back to the palace and tell them to have a long trough made, one as long as this stick. After filling this trough with water, have them place this stick in the water. The end of the stick that rests lower in the water will be the one which came from the root end of the tree trunk; the other end will be the one which came from that part of the tree trunk closer to the branches.

At the palace they followed these directions exactly. Marking each end of the stick with the end of the tree trunk it came from, they sent it back to the European court. answer was correct, and so the Turkish padişah had now acquired two additional cities for his kingdom

Next the European court sent to the Turkish padişah three

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horses--all the same color, all the same height, and all seemingly the same age. With the horses came these instructions: "You are to determine which of these horses is the mother, which is the daughter, and which the granddaughter. If you can do this, you will receive another European city; if you cannot, then we shall declare war on you.

The padişah at once ordered that all of the veterinarians in the land be assembled to examine the three horses none of them was able to solve the problem. Within a day or two after the failure of the veterinarians to provide an answer to the latest problem, the youngest son said to the padişah's daughter, "I think that your father must be in trouble again. Go and find out what it is that is upsetting him so much."

The girl went to the palace and asked, "What is worrying you so much, Father?"

Puzzle
"Well, the same European court has sent me another puzzle. They have sent three horses--all the same color, all the same height, and all seemingly the same age. With them came this message: 'You are to determine which of these horses is the mother, which the daughter, and which the granddaughter. If you can do this, you will receive another European city; if you cannot, then we shall declare war on you.'"

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The young man thought for a minute and then he said "Tell them to feed those horses with barley for three days without allowing them to have even a drop of water. Then, after the third day, take them to a stream. The one which drinks and leaves first will be the mother. The one which leaves next will be the daughter, and the one which leaves last will be the granddaughter."

The people at the palace followed these directions, placing tags on each horse to indicate which was the mother, which the daughter, and which the granddaughter. When the horses were returned to the European court, the people there were greatly impressed. They requested the privilege of seeing the man so ingenious as to be able to solve the problems they had sent to the Turkish padişah.

Throughout the time that the demands from the European court had been made, the padişah had supposed that the solutions to the puzzles had been provided by his wise daughter. Calling her to him, the padişah said, "We have been requested to send to the European court for a visit person who has solved the puzzles. I am going to send you to that European court accompanied by 500 soldiers

The girl then said, "Father, it was not I who knew correct answers to those questions. It was such-and-such a boy who knew the answers."

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"Well, my daughter, bring him here."

When the boy was brought to the presence of the padişah this ruler said, "Here, my son, are 500 soldiers to escort you. I want you to go to such-and-such a European court for a visit."

boy answered, "I do not want an escort or anything of the sort."

"Why is that?" the padişah asked.

no, Your Majesty, I don't need them."

Saying this, the boy set out at once on his journey to the European court. On the way he came upon a man who was holding his ear to the earth and listening. He said,

— "Selâmünaleyküm, O Listener to the Ground!"

"Aleykümselâm,³ O Solver of Three Great Puzzles!"

"How did you know that I was the Solver of Three Great Puzzles?"

"By listening to the ground."

The young man then said, "I am going to such-and-such a European court. Will you become my companion on that journey?"

"Yes, I shall."

³ The traditional greetings exchanged between Moslem strangers: Peace be unto you/May peace be unto you too.

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After walking for a while, they came to a river where they saw a large man sucking up the water into his mouth so fast that none flowed past him. "Selâmünaleyküm, O Water Drawer!" said the boy

"Aleykümselâm, O Solver of Three Great Puzzles!"

"How did you know that I am the Solver of Three Great Puzzles?"

"Well, I learned about it by drawing in this water.

"I am on my way to such-and-such a European court. Will you become my companion on that journey?"

"Yes, I shall."

Now they were three companions. As they walked along, they came upon a man who kept tossing huge trees this way and that way. Some of them he tossed great distances, as far as from here to Çarşamba or even Samsun.⁴ The boy called to this man, "Selâmünaleyküm, O Tosser of Trees!"

"Aleykümselâm, O Solver of Three Great Puzzles!"

"How did you know that I am the Solver of Three Great Puzzles?"

"I learned that by tossing trees."

young man then said, "I am going to such-and-such a

⁴ Like Ünye, the taping site, these cities are also Black Sea ports. Samsun is about twenty-five miles to the west of Ünye, and Çarşamba about fifteen miles to the west.

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European court. Will you become my companion on that journey?"

"Yes, I shall.

Now they were four companions. After they had gone a little farther, they saw a man a great distance ahead of them, but that man reached them in two mighty leaps. The boy called to this man, "Selâmünaleyküm, O Mighty Leaper!"

"Aleykümselâm, O Solver of Three Great Puzzles!"

"How did you know that I am the Solver of Three Great Puzzles?"

"I learned that through my leaping."

Now they had become five companions. They traveled along together some distance farther, and after a while began to approach their destination. Soon they came to Europeans stationed along the way to welcome them. These people were surprised to see only five Turks arriving instead of the 500 they had expected. The leader of the European group said, "This shouldn't be. We made expenditures and arrangements for 500 people to be our guests, but only five of you appear.

To this objection the young man said, "We shall accept the provisions for 500 people."

"If you do, young man, that will be fine, but if you do not, we shall cut you all to pieces

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"Very well," said the youngest son.

For dinner, food had been prepared for 500 people, and the Turks were required to consume it all or be cut up themselves. Four of the Turks--all except the Water Drawer--sat down at the table, but the fifth one stood apart, not eating at first. All of the Europeans stared at him. The four seated Turks ate as much as they could and then withdrew. At that point the Water Drawer started in on the food. He just sucked up whatever was being brought in in large kettles and then tossed the empty kettles aside. After he had consumed five cauldrons of food in this way, the Europeans were satisfied. They said, "All right, that is enough."

they were resting in their quarters, the Solver of Three Great Puzzles said to the Listener to the Ground "Listen to the ground and discover what the Europeans are saying about us."

After keeping his ear to the ground for a short while, the Listener said, "These Europeans have a girl whom they will race against us tomorrow. If we fail to beat her in a footrace, they will kill all of us."

Then the Solver of Three Great Puzzles said to the Mighty Leaper, "You will be on duty tomorrow."

Mighty Leaper said, "You go and find a nice cold drink for me. I'll get the girl to sit in the shadow of a tree,

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drink some of that liquid, and fall asleep

the next day as the race was about to begin, the young man looked in vain for any sign of the Mighty Leaper. When the girl started to run, the young man asked Listener to the Ground to find out what Mighty Leaper was doing. Listener to the Ground reported that Mighty Leaper was sitting asleep beneath a tree. Tosser of Trees threw a tree at Mighty Leaper and awakened him just barely in time for him to win the race.

That evening the Solver of Three Great Puzzles said to Listener to the Ground, "Find out what they plan to do tomorrow."

Holding his ear to the ground for a few minutes, Listener said, "They are sprinkling gasoline⁵ everywhere for the purpose of burning us up."

"Listen again and find out if there are any rivers nearby."

After a moment Listener replied, "Yes, there is a river located in such-and-such a place."

young man then sent Water Drawer to that river to draw up a large quantity of water. In the morning when the flames began to rise, the companions remained unconcerned

⁵ This is a flagrant anachronism

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They lay still in the house where they were staying. As the flames approached that house, Water Drawer emptied the water of the river over them and extinguished the fire.

Finally the ruler of that European kingdom had no choice but to give this young man the hand of his daughter.⁶

Accepting the daughter of this European padişah, the youngest son started the return trip to Turkey. Along the way back, Listener to the Ground, Water Drawer, Mighty Leaper, and Tosser of Trees all resumed their former occupations at the places where the Solver of Three Great Puzzles had found them. As soon as the young man reached Istanbul, he was taken to the presence of the Turkish padişah.

The padişah asked him, "Well, what happened on your trip?"

"Your Majesty, it was such-and-such and so-and-so."

"Was any of this related to your dream?"

⁶ There is no real preparation for this development. Neither in the young man's going to Europe nor in his activities there is there any indication that the European hostility toward the Turkish guests is in any way related to the defense of the girl or an attempt to prevent her betrothal. In folktales girls are often won as brides by a protagonist who passes certain Suitor Tests. Sometimes one of the tests is a footrace, and when there is such a race, it is often with the girl herself. See, for example, the classical story of Atalanta.

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"I don't know. I dreamed about a star and about a crescent moon."⁷

"Well, then, let the European girl be your star, and let my daughter be your moon

The three were then married in a wedding that lasted for three days and three nights."⁸

⁷ There is some confusion in symbolism here. The Star and Crescent is a symbolic combination standing for Turkey and also for Islam. The sole design on the Turkish flag is the Star and Crescent. Two brides representing Star and Crescent should both be Turkish--or at least Moslem. In variants of this tale, the two brides stand for Sun and Moon, a combination that creates no confusion.

⁸ Missing from the beginning of this tale is a statement that would make the initial conflict more meaningful to non-Turkish readers. It is considered bad luck to tell one's dream to anyone unless that person first says, "May it be auspicious!" In all the variants of this tale in ATON that information is provided early in the tale.